

Dungeon S 671

Chapter 671 New Year Eve's Dinner - Part 2

Even though the food court instance was packed like sardines, the hawkers had already become experts in handling this level of workload. It was nothing new after a few weeks, and some managed to increase in cultivation grade through consistent cooking with spiritual power.

However, they had not expected the following when Si Fang personally came down to give the hawkers a heads up on what's coming while their penguin assistants continued cooking.

"WHAT?! Feeding an estimate 2000 people in one night? I don't even necessarily serve that many in a week!" One of the hawkers who handled the mixed rice stall exclaimed. (Jin definitely had more than that if not for the splitting) For the people who cooked in bulk and sold at a reasonable price, San Sun claimed that it was an impossible feat to achieve.

"The order came from Boss Jin personally. Apparently, he's holding some "mini" conference and needs food to be cooked because of some miscommunication with his food caterer. According to him, supplies will be readily available as long as guys accept the orders. No price changes in the supplies but he won't mind paying a little more for the food, especially since he understands that it's a late order." Si Fang explained, and the hawkers started to ponder.

"So, do we keep serving until the orders stop? Or will we have to keep going even after the new year starts? Because we only have that limited amount of time to prepare."

"Ah, thankfully Jin told me he will stop ordering by 11.30. If there are any unfulfilled orders by 12, you guys can go ahead and cancel it. He also added the Panda Burgers will be taking orders too so I will speak to Ke Ru later." Si Fang noted, and the rest were having some form of small talk.

"I assume the guests are not too picky with the food..."

"...More like our food finally reached a certain standard. Hahah!"

"But it's a shit ton of money if we can clear his orders."

"Perhaps Jin is trying to help us earn money, too? If he is going to advertise our food, we might be able to sell better in the future."

"You mean stop being a hawker and get a restaurant?"

"That would be a nice dream, and think of the instance he will make for us if we plan to upgrade!"

"So, we are accepting this challenge?"

"Why not? I never say no to more money."

The hawkers knew that they had to come to an agreement.

Currently, time was a precious commodity, given that the penguins were holding the fort for them on their own. Hence, their representative, San Sun had decided to go ahead with the request.

"Excellent, I will inform Boss Jin about it, and I believe the first few orders should come in soon but don't you guys forget to serve the customers here first. They are as important as the ones waiting." Si Fang emphasised and the rest gave a resounding shout.

"In hindsight, they would have never expected that this particular challenge turned out to be like a ripple slowly growing and transforming into a mighty tidal wave going forth to hit the world's cooking scene. Later generations would refer to them as the founding members of the Pyramid Chef Guild." Kraft said to the entire group.

"What are you blabbering about?" Lynn asked as she placed the last dish on the table. A pot full of noodles, particularly soba. "Just ignore him, he seems to have simply gotten too bored," Jin advised her to pay Kraft no heed. The foxy man might have spoken out of tune after Jin told them about how the monsters wanted to try other food from this world.

As the fragrance of the noodles reached to everyone's olfactory senses, there was a reason why Lynn decided to choose soba noodles for the last meal of the year.

In Lynn's culture, eating soba at the end of the year symbolised letting go of the hardships of the year and looking forward to strength and resiliency in the new year. A dish so humble in nature yet meaningful when the whole shop family ate with her.

"Ah! Did you manage to eat it with your father?" Jin had nearly forgotten that the two Sub System Users still had their own friends and family.

"Yeap! I had it with my dad this afternoon. Actually, he was the one who made the dish for lunch, because no matter how drunk and broken he had been, he never failed to make this dish for me. However, I never appreciated it up until now." Lynn answered with a bit of melancholy, and everyone quietly ate the soba noodles with various toppings and side dishes on the table.

"While I did learn how to do the proper one from my formal training, I learnt this particular soba soup base from him." Lynn shared with a blush and added that she did improve on it too.

However, there was something that Lynn had not revealed to the whole group. Being able to eat soba noodles with Jin on New Year's Eve also had a distinctive meaning.

"Soba ni iru."

Roughly translated to 'I'll be there at your side'. Lynn started to understand the meaning of family from Jin, and she hoped by eating with soba with the family she had forged through blood and sweat, they could be near each other forever regardless of the circumstance.

"Now that you mention it, I do feel the family kind of taste." Qiu Yue teased Lynn a bit and finally revealed that her parents had flown for an overseas trip without her. "They kept having the impression that I am staying over with my boyfriend, so they decided not to interfere much."

Obviously, when Lynn heard it, everyone on the table could hear the metal ladle crack under pressure. In turn, Qiu Yue quickly turned her tune and tried not to offend the chef of the night. She remembered

that they agreed to have their little game of chasing after Jin but that the dinner table was supposed to be off limits zone.

Yet the issue was that both of them had secretly played the game at the dinner table, so Lynn pretended to be magnanimous and decided to back off and not pursue the matter.

Needless to say, Jin continued to be as ignorant to their advances as usual and proceeded to tell them about the current situation they were facing. (Despite the constant smirking of a certain foxy guy.)

Milk also reported on how the new fully fledged demon exorcists were preparing as much as possible for their upcoming expedition and even told Jin about the Ghost Armourer.

"Honestly, I cannot be bothered to find something that wishes to hide. It means that that Ghost Armourer you talked of, is not proud of his own goods." Kraft previously received Milk's request and openly objected to searching as he scooped himself another bowl of piping hot noodles.

"Still, I believe it's a good angle to improve the store for the new year. I will attempt to get hold of Hou Fei and see if he knows anything about the Ghost Armourer. Of course, priorities wise, this is not a pertinent issue." Jin thanked Milk for the additional info.

Next Yun shared an update from the System about two animal people tribes deciding not to sign anything and return to their village. The rest who stayed had been given individual islands near to relatively near to each other. "I have also provided them with a week's worth of supply as a pity gift. They had been made aware of the consequences yet decided to proceed anyway, so I hope you plan to stand by your decision of punishing them, Jin."

"No doubts about that, I sure will," Jin replied affirmatively before asking how Peppers was.

"Ayse fixed me up rather quickly, though I am still a bit sore that I could not damage the Porkcupine. I still believe, credit should be given to me for weakening him, especially when that Avatar of whatever fire could kill it in a few blows." Peppers argued and everyone sarcastically praised her, provoking her into a semi rage mode until Milk soothed her down between her bosoms.

As the dining table updates began to slow down, Zeru decided to raise his own issue up.

"While I understand it's all smiles and laughter at the end of the year, I feel that I have issues to report about the Farming World."

Chapter 672 Zeru's Farming World Repor

"Has the situation turned for the worst?" Jin asked, and Zeru shook his head calmly.

"Not at the moment. However, we have received warnings from both the Southern Stars and Western Skies organisations about increased activities. More locations like demon rats hideout and training cave camps had been discovered and marked. The mousefolks had also been very successful in confirming the information too, and upon verification, the System updated the existing map of the Northern Area." Zeru started his reporting while everyone continued to listen and eat at the same time.

"Gold also stated that more and more fake hideouts have started showing up. Despite our progress, the northern area has yet to be fully mapped. In conclusion, we still don't have a full grasp on the extent of the rats' control."

"I do not mind helping out with the mapping. Now that I know Ayse's mana controlling vest is working, the pain shouldn't be as bad as before." Peppers surprisingly volunteered for the mission, but everyone knew what her hidden motivation was.

"Were you planning on bombing the cave hideouts?" Jin asked blatantly, and Peppers immediately nodded her head. "You do understand they are CAVE hideouts, right? Blasting the entrance does not mean much against the rats. They can burrow themselves out of the debris. Not everything is about the extent of the explosion."

However, Peppers laughed in the face of Jin's logic: "Ha ha ha! Have you forgotten that I am the mighty Demonic Queen Sage? I have magic beyond your comprehension." Peppers smirked as if she had some ultimate trick under her sleeve.

"Okay, colour me curious. What is your plan?" Jin placed his chopsticks down and decided to listen intently to Peppers' proposition.

"I am not telling you just yet! It's a very grand secret... but I might be willing to give you a hint if you hand me that delicious looking chicken cutlet that was specially made just for you by Big Sis Lynn." Peppers hungrily eyed her would-be prize.

"What?! I already gave you mine! Don't be such a glutton when you had a total of two cutlets!" Milk exclaimed, but Peppers was adamant about it.

"She got frustrated by the fact that her explosive magic wasn't effective against the Father Porkcupine. After that, she had spent her time further researching into your world's technology during her recovery. Upon learning the capability of a bunker buster bomb, she had been experimenting on how to replicate it." Yun revealed in lieu of the System as she obviously did not want Peppers to win an additional chicken cutlet.

"Why, Yun? Why betray me like this!!!!" Peppers pouted, but Jin decided to reciprocate a little by giving her half of his. Despite her fickle childish ways, she nevertheless possessed one of the highest offensive stats among his bellators.

"Aside from the increased sightings of demon rat hideouts, Sebastia who's still lurking in the capital has also reported a significant increase in production from the rat's war machinery. It looks like even the most compliant of humans had been drafted to work for the Demon Rats."

"You mean forced into slavery. Just call it for what it is. They are being given little to no compensation for what they do. It will be surprising if they get more than the bare minimum to eat. There is no way you can call that work." Qiu Yue responded, but Zeru continued his reporting.

"In more pleasant news, the Northern Bulwark under General Matt Umiterus has begun to receive some aid quietly from the various governments and organisations. The supply route from the sea port and the town of Wecha had also been secured with various guard posts, giving the people who escaped, some form of hope."

"That's indeed some good news. Speaking about escaping, any idea on how the other towns are faring?"

"After Peppers' display of power wiping several battalions in various towns, the Northern Bulwark has decided to use that as the momentum to incite rebellions in other towns. Some were successful, but not many were quick to act. For the towns who have decided to proceed with the rebellion, the Dark Templars assisted with much valour along with the mousefolks that I trained. We assisted approximately 600+ people out of the towns."

"System will not deny the mousefolks' efforts. Bellator Zeru has trained them exceptionally well." The System chimed in on the conversation with its own opinion before Yun proceeded to continue for it.

"According to the System, the tactics the mousefolks deployed had been simple, but the execution was flawless, allowing them to break into their storehouses and steal tons of food, raw material and even gold."

"However, knowing our Boss, we understand that such results are not acceptable unless we also managed to save those who were willing, given that we had the resources to do more. Therefore, with an expanded network of Southern Skies spies, the Jacks lead by Gold and Silver have performed multiple sabotages in those towns by kidnapping families on a daily basis. The Demon Rats barracks also suffered from a varying degree of arson attacks."

"That's rather drastic but effective." Jin thought out loud, but Kraft added that it was standard procedures during wartime.

"We can't exactly play fair when we need manpower," Kraft noted as he felt the itch to contribute.

"Besides, I believe the dramatic boost in military production is because they want to have an overwhelming force to go against the town of Wecha. Set an example to the remaining humans that the rebels can be crushed easily. If they succeed, it would significantly break the morale of the rest of the towns, especially since all these sabotages and uprisings are happening."

"Hmmm, if that's the case, we can't let that happen. How fortified is the town of Wecha? Do we need to provide them assistance in shoring up their defences?" Qiu Yue asked as the one in charge of construction and development.

"Standard defences, nothing as fancy as what we have at our Dungeon City Fortress," Zeru replied.

"System, are you able to create a predictive analysis on the upcoming invasion based on the limited amount of data?" Jin asked, and the System emphasised the need for Peppers to perform her scans to have a rough idea of the whole situation. "As of now, any analysis would be moot due to a severe lack of information." The System stated.

"Alright, we need to have some contingencies and a rough plan on how to proceed with this. Qiu Yue, can I trouble you with this? You are a better strategist compared to me." Jin asked, and Qiu Yue was more than happy to take over the workload.

"Judging from the estimated size and scale, we probably need to create another Raid instance. But as for the rest, you can leave it to me. I was getting bored with handling the finer details of the dungeon city fortress. It's already more or less impenetrable, and Moloch can follow up with the minor stuff since he

has learnt quite a lot from me... not to mention he is the 'mayor' of the city. He's got to pull his own weight once in a while hahah!" Qiu Yue joked.

"I will start sourcing and setting aside food supplies for the upcoming war. With the increased number of animal people on deck, we should be able to create a proper food and supplies reinforcement plan." Lynn took the initiative and Jin was impressed by her foresight.

"But for now, let's have dessert." Lynn beckoned Yun and Qiu Yue to follow her back to the kitchen. Peppers tagged along too... after all, that is where the food awaited.

Chapter 673 New Year Eve's Dinner - Final

The end of the year was mostly uneventful aside from the long chats which Jin appreciated. The bellators stayed, and each shared a story or two of their past. It had been a bit awkward initially, especially since this was the first time in a long while that Jin stayed with the entire group to chat rather than get caught up by his work.

The System Users were most intrigued about Kraft's story about how Rex got betrayed by his Panda Lord Zhou Yu despite his utmost loyalty. The foxes, including Pei, had also briefly shared their lives and their own stories which led them to become servants of Kraft.

(Although Kraft kept insisting that they were companions and not servants, the majority claimed otherwise except for Kiyu. Still, from the tone of their accusation, it was clear that only Pei believed this to be the actual case.)

As for the master of the house... he didn't have anything worthwhile to share since his life turned for the better (or worse?) after he met with the System. Speaking of which, he had been so busy that he had turned down a lot of his friends' catch ups and meetings.

"Wait, so that means you never met up with Yong Heng and Guo Zhong ever since? Hard to believe considering how close you guys used to be." Qiu Yue, the only one who had been part of Jin's past before he turned into a dungeon supplier, was a little concerned that his new work focused lifestyle may potentially erode his existing friendships.

"Ah...sorta. I did message the two of them recently, but I just told them that I was in some dead end job, slogging like a bull for the company. (Technically true) And, they kind of understood my situation." Jin would have loved to reconnect with them, but he did not know how to convey the message to his friends as showing them the dungeon supplier store would definitely expose him to a lot of lies.

Meeting up with Qiu Yue had led him into eventually making her a Sub System User, but he could not picture doing the same do his buddies...

"Mmm, actually, that's the problem with me too. I never really revealed much to the others in my social circle. The only exception is my previous supervisor, who did not really know me despite the close working relationship we had." Qiu Yue affirmed Jin's predicament. "I even told my parents that it was compulsory to work in the company's campus, given the nature of the work."

"Hahaha! Nature of the work. That is undoubtedly true." Lynn chuckled. "At the rate, we are going, we can be considered as a full blown inter world mercenary company rather than just assistants to a dungeon supplier store."

"I don't think that's a good comparison. Mercenaries don't usually earn the moolah you do by selling top quality food, nor do they spend it doing various levels of research. Let's not even start with the city." Kraft chose to put in his two cents. "Even companies and organisations do not wield that much influence and power over these many people unless you are talking about the top 1% multinational companies, JODE or JOME."

"I guess in terms of size, we are more akin to JOME. They literally own the Vatican city and have armies of exorcists at their disposal. From what I know, I don't think JODE officially even owns a city despite their overwhelming influence in the south eastern regions." Jin commented.

"Heh! I think we are missing the most apparent winners since the past. We have yet to include the Royal Zodiac Clans into the picture." Yun chipped in her opinion to the matter.

"And I am not talking about just the Zodiac Clans. The Japanese Seven God Clans, The European Astro Zodiac Clans and even the American Tarot Groups are in the same category. They are the people that controlled those companies and organisations." Yun was explicitly hinting Jin to be one of such groups.

"Who cares about all this stuff?! Let's start the countdown in the Dungeon Cave Town and throw some fireworks out!" Peppers insisted, and Kraft began to make a mental count in his head.

"Isn't it a bit early for that? It should just be evening at the Dungeon Cave Town around now? Also why not the Dungeon Fortress City?" Kraft was curious.

"Because I cannot see the sky in the Dungeon Fortress City, duh!" Peppers rolled her eyes at the obvious. "Why ignite fireworks if there is no sky to fire upon?"

"Then, what are we still waiting for? Let's scare the people there!" Jin said in such an impromptu manner that the others joined in a heartbeat. (Naturally, Peppers was dying inside with much anticipation at the chance that her whim may turn into fruition.)

When they teleported into the adventurer's guild, the first person they saw was Zhi Nu, the Weaver Girl turned Guild Manager ordering some goblin merchants to place the food trays for the upcoming buffet. "Boss! Thanks for the treat! The preparations are almost complete and if you wish to partake on any food, do not hesitate!" Zhi Nu waved excitedly at Jin and the other Bellators.

Zhi Nu had invited every single merchant under Jin's command as well as a few very prominent merchants. She had decided to use this buffet dinner as a way to earn some new connections. And even if that endeavour ended unsuccessfully, at the very least, Jin's Orc and Goblin merchants would enjoy it. A classic win-win.

"Hahah! No need, Zhi Nu. We already had our dinner but -HEY PEPPERS NO ICE CREAM! Milk, please drag that kid back in line or no fireworks for her." Jin spoke out loud, but at the same time, Kraft decided to follow Peppers' example by commanding his foxes to snatch several boxes of ice cream away.

Jin had no idea how the foxes were managing to balance those boxes, and the only silver lining was that Peppers was not as greedy as Kraft. The Dark Elves in their Night Foxes outfit however decided to

pretend not to see the crime. They all knew better than to foolishly try and compete against the insanely strong individual foxes.

"Sorry, Jin. I may hate Kraft, but I do not dislike ice cream!" Pei apologised coyly as she transformed into a fox form and stole a box away, leaving Jin somewhat speechless.

"Don't worry, we have at least three more crates." Zhi Nu telepathically whispered to Jin before acting furious that the two bellators were acting like this.

Surprisingly, Kraft stopped that mischevious behaviour after running out of the adventurer's guild as he waited patiently outside on top of Itori, the giant white fox with his loot. "Come, I shall bring all of you to the nearest mountain peak and we can shoot our fireworks over there." Kraft offered with an ice popsicle in his mouth. Jin knew better than to argue with the egotistical fox leader.

Soon after, the whole gang was up on a cliffside area with the perfect view over the Dungeon Cave Town right beneath them. The town had changed drastically since Jin last saw it.

The main reason being the time difference between worlds.

From the once medium size adventurer camp, it had turned into a proper town with various facilities. And while they did not officially have a mayor, Zhi Nu had perfectly fulfilled the role by taking care of everything. The board of committee under her were also Jin's underlings, and thus the town was broadly speaking, his second upcoming city.

"No wonder, the profit is steadily rising." Jin thought to himself before looking at his watch. It was exactly five minutes before the start of the new year in Jin's world, and the bellators began to weave their magic spells as Peppers proposed a firework competition with Yun being the judge.

Even Zeru had decided to join in the fun by creating a firework with his chi. Knowing that they were lacking in the chi department to win against the bellators, Qiu Yue and Lynn had decided to pin their hopes on Jin.

"What, why me?!" Jin asked, and they each took his hand and demanded to see a specific type of firework. "Because you made us worry earlier this afternoon! So do some work and win the competition!" The two girls shouted in unison and in less than a few seconds, Yun announced the start of the competition.

Happy New Year.

Chapter 674 A Drop In Priority

"Had a good feast?" Jin asked the following day. The dungeon supplier was surprised at how well rested the space crew seemed to be. In reality, all of those fellows had still been drunk not too long ago from all the partying. Fortunately, the System had sent over Orc Mages to cast a spell which could remove the hangover in an instant. (No wonder the Orcs could be such heavy drinkers.)

"Fantastic," Rei mumbled as he was typing furiously on his work laptop, tidying up a few paragraphs on his spreadsheet before showing it to Jin.

"Sorry, I know this meeting is supposed to be about the timeline for finding the Titan, but I really need to show you this. I've already upheld my side of the bargain. I need to ask you to do the same." Rei presented Jin with his movie studio's finances and the balance sheet for the previous year.

To Jin, it was mostly a random assortment of numbers. As a former engineer major, he had no idea how to correctly extrapolate the data presented.

"Studio Mashi's human resources managed to email me this in confidence. Basically, if they do not receive any money by this week, they have no other choice but to close at least half the studio down." Rei said seriously.

"System, please take a look at this, I don't have an accountant to interpret all these. Is it really as bad as Rei makes it out to be?" Jin asked, and the System started crunching the numbers.

"While System is able to provide statistical reports and a simple predictive analysis of the studio's expenses, it is not capable of providing accurate advice as per this context given that it is not under the System's control. The System also currently does not have anyone expert enough to make such advice unless User creates one as discussed previously." The System stated that without full control over the movie studio, it would not be providing services related to them.

"I will just take the expenses report for now." Jin had no intention of acquiring yet another liability without assessing the risk. Reacting to that thought, the System showed various graphs and charts which left everyone in the conference room with dumb expressions.

"Wait a minute, I think I might have someone who can analyse all of these for me." Jin took his phone out and looked through his contacts.

"Ah, Jin. Superb timing. I had planned to contact you in a bit myself. Oh, by the way, happy new year to you." Claire picked up the call and wished Jin well.

"Happy new year to you too, Claire. How can I help you?"

"This morning I received confirmation for the animals coming your way from Shenzhen's Cultivation Zoo. I shall send you a manifest of all the animals so you can at least prepare the necessary space. I have also already conducted interviews of the staff who wish to work for your zoo. I will attach the list together with the manifest."

"Oh dear, I totally forgot about the cultivation zoo. Sorry, I was too busy settling the new upcoming dungeon instances." Jin lied.

"No worries. The actual shipments of animals have yet to arrive after Grandma Yuan's donation to the World Wildlife Federation. For now, it's just the list."

"I see, then I will make it a priority to look at the animal manifest as well as the selected interviewees. Is it very urgent or will it be enough if I get it done by next week?"

"I see no problem with that. Anyways, what's the problem you are having? It's rare for you to call... unless you need a favour."

"It pains me to admit, but unfortunately, this time's no different. I have a request to make. You are among the few who know a little about my special powers, so you may not be too surprised about what I am about to ask. But first are you by any chance skilled in accounting?"

"I do have a basic degree in accounting and sometimes help to break down such information for Grandma Yuan. Why? Do you need help filing this year's taxes?" Claire wondered what Jin was so cryptic about.

"No, it's something entirely different, but I require an accountant's input. My erm usual accountant refuses to cooperate. Do you have time to drop by and take a look? If I need to, I can pay...?" Jin requested for her help politely, but Claire laughed.

"I doubt you can afford my hourly salary, nevertheless I will come around in the evening and see what I can do. Besides, I do need to discuss some additional things with you about the JODE administration centre and we perhaps we can use the time to have an in depth discussion on the cultivation zoo instance."

"I understand that your main income comes from your instances, but please be aware that those cannot fail no matter the cost. It would smear Grandma Yuan's reputation." Claire's tone turned strict and demanding.

"Thank you, Ms Claire. Be seeing you." Jin swallowed hard, finished his call and told Rei to wait till evening for the review of his situation.

"Back to the topic at hand. I understand that all of you, especially Rei, have some grievances on how to proceed in regards to the Titan. And upon discussion with my bellators about the store's current predicament, I have come to the conclusion that I might need to put this mission at a lower priority." Jin's announcement came as a big shock to the entire space crew who had been eager to go out.

"What, then does that mean our work is futile?" Rei was the first to seek answers.

"No. I am going to let you guys do it at your own pace. You mentioned how our Salvaging Golems still have a lot of flaws left, and you are only accepting the goblin pilots to board them because they can resurrect and I insisted on proceeding."

"So, I want you to start the salvaging operation and collect all the debris while improving the Salvaging Golems. When I say all, I mean every single little bit you can find no matter how minor it seems. Everything is useful to the System, even junk." Jin emphasised.

"If you need some context of why the sudden change in priority, the Dungeon Core Barrier holding the Dungeon City Fortress from invasion will be down in a few days time. We might even be asking Moloch to drop the shield earlier for the Dungeon Core to gain some additional energy for an impromptu barrier." Jin explained.

Jin had received information that The Dungeon World actually rewarded the premature abandonment of the 'newbie' barrier. Upon releasing the current one, the Dungeon Core would be capable of deploying a city wide barrier that could last upwards of ten minutes after the city had been officially established.

However, Moloch stated that the strength of the barrier varied and was proportional to the remaining number of days they would have had. He estimated that the city wide barrier could at least fend off an ultimate area of effect attack by King Baal and that should be sufficient for the city to have a fighting chance against his former master's army.

"So, don't be disheartened. The space project will go on. The System and I still need that Titan." Jin reiterated.

Chapter 675 A Big Mistake

Claire arrived earlier than expected at the store, allowing both Rei and Jin to reconvene once again in the conference room instance. Rei handed Claire the documents to take a look at Studio Mashi's expenditure records, and she was quite shocked at what she was looking at.

"Isn't this one of the few more popular animation studios in Japan? Are they really in such a dire state?" Claire asked. Both men were surprised that Grandma Yuan's secretary knew a thing or two about the studio. The serious woman certainly did not seem the type to watch anime.

"Let's say that their previous CEO was not really the cleanest person in the studio. He had been embezzling a large portion of money before he ran away. Not many know about the situation since they've done their best to cover it up. I happen to have a connection there, and he begged me to help the studio. They've been struggling ever since, and the movie I am making is currently the only project they are working on and is somewhat their only lifeline."

"So you're expanding into movies now, Jin? That is a very risky move to play, even more so considering that this one's an overseas studio." Claire warned as she took some time to study the numbers after taking a brief. Unsurprisingly, Claire confirmed that the studio was bound to fail without a LOT of additional budget coming in.

"I am not too sure about the Japanese laws with regards to overseas investment, but saving this studio is nigh impossible. Even if you inject in extra cash, it's less than certain that you will break even. You can forget about seeing any profit from it unless the upcoming movie that Rei is mentioning will become a multimillion dollar hit. And I'm talking USD, not yuan or yen. It is very highly likely that you will experience a loss." Claire concluded.

"What about if I hypothetically create a movie studio and hire those peeps instead?" Jin asked

Claire shrugged at that particular idea but humoured him nonetheless: "I still can't see you incur anything but losses. Nevertheless, that way you won't have to worry that they waste the money and you will have control over the studio. Whatever the case, it's not your responsibility to save any random Tom, Dick and erm in this case, Sato-san from their dying business. If you plan on doing that, I can only conclude that Grandma Yuan had misplaced her faith in you as someone unfit to make sound business decisions."

Rei felt devastated by the sound of her analysis.

"Rei, are you able to get Studio Mashī to send over the incomplete work? Maybe we can still finish from there and publish it ourselves?" Jin suggested yet the manga artist wasn't on board.

"I am choosing Studio Mashī because of their prestige in details and plot as well as their dedication to complete the project. I am not going to hand it over to some Tom, Dick and in this case, Xiao Ming to complete their work." Rei was fully adamant on it.

"Then my advice to you, Jin, is to not take this deal. You are walking in a financial death trap because of your friend. Let me repeat that you have no obligation to fulfil his request." Claire did not know the whole situation, but she had been through enough to see that trying to save Studio Mashī would be a big mistake.

Contrary to her appearance, she did watch a few of their movies while younger and loved their characters. She would definitely be sad to know that the studio might have to close down due to bad internal office politics. However, that did not mean she would allow Jin to make a wrong business decision to save it.

"Unfortunately, I do owe him an obligation to save the studio, and that is why I also need your help." Jin became extremely shameless when asking for Claire's help.

"Why should I? I have enough on my plate as is. My only helping you are limited to things connected to Grandma Yuan. This does not extend to helping you solve the problems of your friends." Claire replied until Jin dangled his trump card in front of her.

"In return, I can let you learn more about the System. Perhaps it can enhance your skills and traits too." Jin said out loud, and Claire was dumbfounded. How could he offer something like that so casually to an outsider?

"Watch your words. I have no idea what you are talking about." Claire pretended not to hear it until Jin had clarified the white elephant in the room.

"He is already under the influence of the System, and to be honest, he isn't a friend. More of a colleague." Jin did not say much, especially when 'controlling' isn't the best of words to convince someone to join them.

"What? But judging from the conversation we had, he seemed to be in a different profession from you. Movie directing? Some animation artist?" Claire was getting frustrated that someone that simple was able to be exposed to the System. Why not her?

"I am a Manga Artist, and I actually hailed from another world. You know like those transmigration fantasies?" Rei decided to speak the truth out and instead, incurred the opposite effect. Claire could not make any sense from this. Was this just some sort of out of season April Fool's joke or was this after all an elaborate plot to get her to join Jin?

"Look. Things are really that simple. He's truly from another world and simply a typical engineer from his original world. Not some magic wielding super crazy powerful cultivator or that sort."

"... Fine. Show me his creations, and I'll believe you." Claire folded her arms, wanting some proof. "You claimed that you owe him an obligation, which indicates that he must have already created something for you in return." Claire's demand made Jin slightly cautious.

"You see, if we show you his works, it will expose even more things about this particular System I have. Until you give me your word and sign a temporary contract, I am not allowed to give you any more information." Jin tried to explain kindly as he had vastly underestimated Claire's reaction.

The secretary sighed as she picked up the just materialised temporary contract and read the terms briefly. She quickly realised that there were many underlying meanings to the contract's term.

"I see this contract has been vetted by a well versed lawyer. There's a lot of double meanings in the terms despite its outward simplicity." Even if that was the case, she was innately and insanely curious about this particular System that Jin was hiding.

Grandma Yuan had always kept a mysterious façade whenever this topic was breached, and it always made Claire feel left out when Yuan and Jin talked about it. She desired to know what made the System so special that it could have enabled a boy with seemingly normal qualifications to become so outstanding in a mere matter of months.

"Fine, I will sign but only on the condition that you limit this to today. If you presumably can really brainwash me, then I will accept the specified consequences." Claire demanded, so Jin overwrote the time limit on the contract limiting it to midnight of January 1st. Upon signing, Claire felt that something entered past her entire body as if something took a long look into her soul.

Chapter 676 One Day Contract

"What is this?" Claire exclaimed when she saw the Salvaging Golem, as well as a number of Orcs and Goblins in the space crew team, laid down their work to greet the three of them. "Is this another one of your Dungeon Instances? Why are the monsters working as if they were real?"

"They are real. Don't hurt their feelings." Rei defended his colleagues as they went further in towards the workshop hangar. There they presented the two Salvaging Golems which were currently being moved into the C-130 Space Explorer for the space salvage mission. Claire could not comprehend what was going on and to complicate things, Rei had asked one of the gobs, Deckerhand to pilot the Salvaging Golem and give their guest a bit of a ...demonstration.

Deckerhand happily answered the call for a demonstration in a moment's notice and took the opportunity to show off some magic by flying towards the Salvaging Golem unit. The other goblin pilots and engineers then assisted Deckerhand to unlock the golem from its mobile pod which was used to transport it to the C-130 Space Explorer.

With some whizzing and steam coming out of the golem, it subsequently came to life and walked out of the mobile pod as if it was perfectly natural. When it proceeded towards Claire, she could see the golem moving very fluidly, indicating no wasted movement, nor balance problems which still plagued their world's current field of robotics. Next Deckerhand showed off the various modalities like the power cutter and skillfully cut a piece of scrap metals into two with ease.

She was even able to interact with the pilot within the golem, and it once again assured her that this was no dungeon instance. All this while, she had assumed that Jin had been using some highly scripted AI for his dungeons, probably somehow gotten from this mysterious system.

This, however, entirely destroyed her conception of the dungeon supplier.

"I told you he's an engineer. Just not the same kind we have here on our Earth." Jin thought Claire would be amazed by the invention of the technology for a Salvaging Golem which was undoubtedly ahead of their world's mechatronics. He did not realise that she was in disbelief because of him.

After receiving a glass of water and calming down a bit, Rei and Jin subsequently gave her a brief summary of how they agreed upon to the obligation that the dungeon supplier had mentioned.

"I see, so in return for these golems, you have to make sure his movie studio is running smoothly or at least able to operate long enough to get the movie published," Claire asked, and they both nodded their heads.

"The System can aid you in financial analysis and prediction until the end of the day as per contract," Jin responded.

"You do know that there are other people who are more capable of making this kind of decision than me?" Claire inquired.

"That may be, but do you think they will share your concern for my business? They won't understand how my business operates, leading them to underestimate our abilities. I need someone who won't make this kind of mistake!" Jin answered, hoping to make Claire feel important.

"Hmph. I am concerned because you are dealing with Grandma Yuan's responsibilities. Not because I am genuinely concerned about you." Claire stated while looking him into his eyes. However, she had already signed the contract, and it would be too much of a shame to just leave without doing anything. Hence she asked Jin where she should do the calculations.

"Demon Exorcist Claire, pass User your laptop." The System's voice suddenly boomed, scaring Claire for a moment and causing her to enter into a defensive stance.

"Oh yeah, I totally forgot that you are a Demon Exorcist Instructor as well," Jin mumbled to himself as he realised that in case he was able to recruit Claire over to his side even if it was periodical. He wouldn't just get someone proficient with finances but also meant the store would have additional firepower to their arsenal even though he did not know what she was capable of.

"System will bestow Demon Exorcist Claire with the abilities of the Financing Sub System for a duration of two hours. After which, the System will cut your connection to the Sub System and terminate your contract by proceeding with the brainwashing." The System announced, and Jin was surprised that the ultimate cheapskate was actually friendly enough to allow Claire to test out a new Sub System.

"Fine by me. Am I correct to assume that this is something similar to a trial run, which could decide whether I am able to enter the System's good grace?" Claire asked out loud since she was unsure where to look for an answer.

"Affirmative. Should Demon Exorcist Claire be able to find an appropriate solution with the help of the Sub System given to you, considerations will be given for your candidacy as a User for the Financing Sub System." The System responded and immediately, Claire passed the laptop to Jin.

All Jin had to do was to place his phone on the laptop. A slight bluish glow emanated through the circuits of the electronic device before he returned it to Claire. She decided to open it while standing, but suddenly a flow of information zoomed past her, seemingly giving her all the supposed insights upon the analytical predictions the System had made.

In an instant, Claire demanded a chair and a table to start working. Both of them lead her to the workshop where she unhesitatingly pushed an entire pile of working prototypes to the ground and started furiously typing on the laptop. (The Orcs nearly cried when their precious delicate prototypes toppled off the floor.)

While her financial knowledge had been a tad rusty, the laptop that she was using took care of that. It gave her the ability to work out all the different possibilities and patterns Studio Mashī was able to undertake.

"Looks like the System had all the tools, but lacked the person to correctly utilise it." Rei deduced the current situation and Jin felt the same way as well. It did previously stated that the knowledge that the System held onto were bountiful, considering the Panda Clan used to a trading conglomerate. The only thing it lacked was probably the financial understanding of the current modern world.

With Claire as the bridge between the System and its unhinged access of the internet (including the dark web), she was able to create various models to understand and potentially rescue Studio Mashī from its would-be fate of bankruptcy. The two males were simply in awe at how fast Claire was.

All those movies portraying hacking by just pushing randomly on some keys on the keyboard would pale in shame to what she was able to do. Not even 15 minutes later, Claire had come up with a solution.

"It's borderline illegal in my opinion and according to the Sub System... but it will work. Even the local and Japanese authorities should not be able to find out about it so soon. However, in order to make this plan work without too much hassle while maintaining the studio's reliability... we have to certain decisions quickly." Claire took a deep breath before declaring.

"I need Rei to become the President of Studio Mashī."

Chapter 677 Financing Sub System Tryou

"Excuse me, WHAT?!" Rei was totally confused by Claire's sudden declaration.

"I have run various mathematical models using the Financing Sub System, and that is the most promising solution I could come up with. Now I also understand why the System gave me only two hours. Looks like it knows what to do, just that, it needed someone like me to verify its methods." Claire stated as she moved the chair back a little and presented the predictive analysis to Rei and Jin.

While Rei had no idea what was going on, Jin had grasped a basic understanding of the whole model in front of him. (After all, studying software engineering in university would be impossible without knowledge on statistical models.)

"How could the mathematical model be an upward trend? I thought the System projected significant losses when it took into account the movie and the expenses along with it? Wait a minute, where did all these stocks come from? I don't remember seeing them in any expenditure report when I last looked at it." Jin exclaimed as he strained his eyes a little further down the report, and Claire laughed.

"The Financing Sub System is totally a cheat. It managed to salvage anything with regards to Studio Mashi in mere seconds. So I collated public expenditure reports from the Japanese authorities and private transactions done by the previous bigwigs in the studio." Claire praised the tool for being the next essential thing needed for financial espionage.

If it ever landed in the wrong hands, whoever held it could become stupidly rich or even destroy the world. She now understood the power and responsibility of possessing the Financing Sub System and why the System would go to drastic lengths to include a brainwash clause to remove the memory of using the Sub System.

The definition of rags to riches was extremely evident in this case, and Claire assumed that Jin must have had this Sub System to maintain the expenses he incurred building the Tree Mall and such.

"Huh, no. Today is the first time I ever heard about such a thing like the Financing Sub System existing." Jin replied honestly to Claire and told her that all of those were through hard work and determination (Naturally, with quite a bit of the higher powers), causing her to widen her eyes.

"Then, how did you afford the Tree Mall? Or those high quality weapons, armour and even food?" She thought that she was being lied to, but there was no air of disbelief around him. There was also no reason for him to bluff Claire at this point in time.

"If we manage to get past this ordeal, I promise to show you more."

"Fine. Anyway, coming back to the topic at hand. I'm now sure that the past CEO of the studio must have realised that his firm was bound to head towards this particular bankruptcy situation. So he started buying out stocks on the market using the studio's name. Maybe to insulate the firm and allow it to weather any economic crisis since stock markets behaved something similar to our seasons. There will always be a hot period and cold period, it just a matter of when." Claire began explaining.

"I think he had made the buying of stocks conspicuous enough to show itself if one had decided to dig for it. But at the same time, it was hiding the intention in plain sight so no one would misuse the stocks that were bought under Studio Mashi's name."

"So, I assume you want me to become the President or CEO of Studio Mashi in order to have access and authorisation to such funds?" Rei questioned, and she nodded her head. It was the few ways to ensure that the studio had cash.

"Considering that Rei was their one and only big time investor in recent times and you have been working closely with them for all this time, I see no qualms about you trying to get the position."

"Feel free to mention that you are personal friends with a secret investor who will temporarily lift them out of the 'poverty' stage. It is far better to use you as the intermediary than having Jin as an outsider try to control it. The laws can get a bit iffy when it crosses national borders." Claire explained.

"But I have no money left, and I don't think Jin has the financial capability to buy over the studio." Rei reiterated.

"Yeah, and judging on how much they need for their project and expenses ... at most I can only finance the first month or so without breaking into my reserves. Still, I would-"

"What are you talking about? Your financial profile is in an absolute mess. Terrible. Chaotic or if you allow me to be blunt for a moment completely fucked up. It's a blessing in disguise for you to have been able to survive up till now and earn a profit. (If only she knew how much of a cut the System itself took...) You are in dire need of someone to take care of your money properly." Claire scolded Jin, and her words pierced straight into his heart.

"You might be a terrific dungeon supplier with the power of the System at your side and maybe a decent boss -I don't know, since I have yet to interact with you on a daily basis. But it looks like the myth is true. Every kind hearted boss is a piss poor boss." Claire said as she adjusted her glasses.

"So, what's the plan if Boss Jin is unable to help me?" Rei questioned, and Claire smirked.

"Remember why I said that I understood the rationale of the System giving me only two hours? In less than a few minutes, the US stock market trading hours will be open, and I have already preset out orders for some stuff."

"Huh?" Jin could not comprehend what was going on.

"Along with the Financing Sub System, I was given a few shares which the System had in its possession of. Though they were just blue chip shares, I guess it is testing me if I could make a turnover with this."

"No, I meant...do you play the stock market on a regular basis or was this because the Financing Sub System gave you such abilities to do that?" Jin questioned.

"Don't you know? I am not just a Demon Exorcist Instructor and secretary to Grandma Yuan. I was an expert in asset and equity management for international banks, done a double degree for business and accounting. Sorry that I lied to you previously since I need to find out your intention." Claire was not apologetic a single bit as she stared at the laptop screen.

"Oh, and I learned the ways of the stock market myself. Didn't I tell you, you can't possibly afford me? So, count yourself lucky that I decided not to charge you for any of this as thanks for letting me be exposed to the System." Claire replied as she waited for the stock market to open in a few moments.

When the trading hours were opened, a single button on her laptop allowed her to start the selling of her blue chip shares with the aid of the Sub System.

Clicks and beeps from the laptop were filling the room. The screen was full of moving graphs, and Claire was switching between various windowed applications to maximise her efficiency in flipping the blue chip shares.

Unlike usual corporate banks who had operators and dealers to sell the stock, the Sub System itself eliminated the middlemen functioning as a stockbroker.

It initially seemed inconceivable, especially since the security, flow of the money and shares were tightly regulated, but most people might not consider that there was a black market even for the stock market. (or had knowledge of its existence.)

Those blue chip shares might not mean much in the normal market since they were mostly associated with smaller companies. However, its a totally different story on the black stock market. The blue chips were ironically the shares of famous public multinational companies, and that meant one blue chip could potentially go up for millions per share.

It should be noted that Claire had been limited to accessing their own world's black market. The Sub System had yet to release the rights for her to participate in the interworld stock market or, potentially even more lucrative, the interworld's black stock market.

Those stocks were as volatile as a ticking time bomb. One wrong move and it could cause a chain reaction to blow up the participating companies in that interworld black market; making their stocks to plummet while others rise.

It was seriously not for the weak hearted and many rich corporate companies who tried to enter that market had been viciously ripped apart by the big sharks.

Of course, the Financing Sub System would be very cautious before making such moves, but it did not hurt for the System and its counterparts to dream about it.

"The US Black Stock Market only has an hour and a half for its opening trading hours. The hours are really tight because the impacts from this particular black market will inadvertently ripple down to the public stock market. Shanghai's Black Stock Market opens after the US Black Stock Market closes etc. The black stock markets then rotate around the 12 most economically powerful countries in the world, leaving out one or two for the day." The Financing Sub System stated loudly through the laptop to explain to Rei and Jin. (Some of the Goblins and Orcs who were mildly interested in it initially, quickly dissipated after failing to understand what was going on.)

"The riskier the bet, the more enticing it is. I've always heard rumours about the Black Stock Market and how it's only something for the privileged few. I never considered myself participating in it. Congratulations Jin, it seems without us knowing you have become part of the 0.001%." Claire made fun of Jin despite knowing the fact that they entered the Black Stock Market due to the powers of the Financing Sub System. She had obviously seen the state of his finances as soon as she had gotten access to the Financing Sub System.

"What? No! I bet the System and Kraft made the access possible. I clearly don't have that much reserve. Maybe the System has it? I mean it has been ripping me off for months." Jin did not understand the teasing and tried to deny it while Claire continued ridiculing him about it. This multitasking did not affect

her focus on the markets, and she still made precise adjustments on the amount to sell and buy. In less than 10 minutes, she had already earned 2 million USD.

To Jin, this sum was already a lot of money, but Claire begged to differ. She considered it far from enough for their plans and continued to push forth buying and selling. Surprisingly, the Sub System not only kept track of her overall sales but also advised her to change her tactics or choose to invest in other companies every once in a while.

"Damn, and here I thought I was cunning enough already," Claire spoke unconsciously with a wide smile. She was clearly enjoying this challenge despite the visible beads of sweat rolling down her neck and the furious typing and moving of her mouse.

Quickly an hour had passed.

She ultimately made five million USD before she decided to call it off. Rei and Jin had only watched the 'Overall Profit' number rise and fall and had been in a roller coaster of emotions. Finally, they had the chance to calm their hearts, only to see a few sudden major losses in that one hour.

They thought that Claire was going to lose it all yet to their surprise, the newest candidate for the Financing Sub System explained that it was a bait to throw off her scent. (As if they understood the real meaning of that.)

After paying the Financing Sub System 20% of the profit to cover its expenses such as the initial blue chips shares and other utilities, they were left with 4 million USD and Rei believed that it should more than enough to tide through for the movie studio.

"What are you talking about? I am taking a million for myself. Take it as the stock broker's fees." Claire's smile turned more wicked, making her appear more like Grandma Yuan, yet Jin accepted her exorbitant fee.

"The Financing Sub System rated your capability with a 2.9 out of 5 and qualified you to become a temporary Sub System User. For repeated use of the Financing Sub System in the future, Demon Exorcist Claire may have to sign another more permanent contract."

"So after all that, I get a measly 2.9? This is the first time I received such a bad score ever since university. Damn, your system is strict." Claire felt hurt that she was only deemed as above average by the System. She sincerely believed earning 5 million USD would have been a good enough demonstration.

"While the System is pleased that the Financing Sub System was able to find a suitable candidate, the methods used had been too textbook. It was successful this time, but there is no guarantee of what will happen if something unexpected arises in the future. System recommends Demon Exorcist Claire to learn more tricks."

"Sigh, fine by me. Anyways, now that we have the money, I shall use the remaining 20 minutes or so to create an offshore shell company to park the money for you to use. Rei, three million USD should be enough as collateral for the rights to become acting president. Call me if everything works out. Afterwards, I will help you get the shares the previous Studio President had left. Then the money portion

should be accounted for, and we will be equally happy." Claire informed the two, as she was looking through her newly received contract. (The System had sent it to her via email.)

Included was a simulation app for a fake black stock market, allowing her to practice on her skills. Although a little hurt, she acknowledged the problems she had faced during the intense one hour worth of buying and selling. It had been such a rush that she would not forget it anytime soon and Claire was looking forward to hopefully experience it again.

Not to mention, the extra million in her pocket. (No wonder, the System was extremely stingy in letting people use the system.)

Chapter 679 A Million Dollars

"Is it really wise to let her go off with a million dollars just like that?!" Rei questioned blatantly right in front of Claire and Jin. As the current System User, he was undoubtedly jealous given the amount she was going to keep. Fortunately, the System clarified the situation and cleared the air of any animosity.

"Demon Exorcist Claire will not be able to claim the one million USD in a single transaction. It will bring up red flags and might cause trouble for her, Grandma Yuan and the User." The System stated, and somehow Claire began to reveal a chuckle.

"Hahaha! Did you really believe I can transfer one million USD into my bank just like that? Maybe it would be possible if I was some big shot or working for the Triads. Unlike you, I don't have a System. I am just a demon exorcist instructor and secretary to Grandma Yuan. If she says that she is a nobody, then that naturally applies to me too." Claire had fun teasing the two males in front of her.

"Besides, having that much money lying around is bound to alert not just the bank but the secret police too. I do not want them to come after me for no particular reason. So, I have placed that money in a shell company and put myself on 'their' payroll. It will write a partial sum for me to withdraw every two months to various bank accounts I own." Claire folded her arms.

"Not to mention, those terrible personal taxes that I'd have to declare after I receive the payout." Her voice was filled with dread, yet it was apparent that Claire had the ability to evade those taxes but still decided to pay them. He wondered if there was something that led to Claire acting like such a law abiding citizen or if she was just morally obedient.

"In any case, you should check with Xiong Da if he happens to know any good Japanese lawyers that will help facilitate the transfer of rights for Rei." Claire shared the next step even though she felt it might be a bit unnecessary.

Still, it was always better to be overly prepared.

"At this point, I think they will accept any help that comes along their way. Just go through the correct procedure and get yourself some insurance so that everything proceeds smoothly. Don't forget you are technically an outsider and should continue to act the part of a potential investor despite your

relationship with them." Claire added, and Jin agreed to message Xiong Da for Rei. For now, the issue was settled despite the frightening move by Claire to acquire 3 million USD in an hour.

"User, please be aware that while the amount of money was considerable minute in the grand scheme of the Black Stock Market, there were already eyes prying at Claire. After the last transaction, the Financing Sub System was ready to forcefully log her out before performing scrambling procedures courtesy of Foxy's counter tracking techniques from the Abyss Web." The System quietly transmitted its message to Jin's mind.

"Is that why you rated her poorly?" Jin questioned as Claire still continued to give some last minute advice to Rei. She was obviously over the top after earning that amount of money, and he guessed that she was on an adrenaline rush right now.

"Affirmative. Demon Exorcist Claire does possess some promising skills, but her unkempt aggressiveness might cause the System and User trouble if she does not learn to act more carefully. In the Black Stock Market, System quotes the following saying from a previous member of the System: 'Gambling is like hunting. You need to wait, give it time. For it is time that rules all gambles. Big success is not something to strive towards. Because people will start to follow you, learn from you, be wary of you and eventually take your prey, your family and ultimately your livelihood!'"

"But you only gave her a few blue chip shares to begin with. Her turnover was five mil!" Jin pretended to laugh, but in his mind, he was arguing with the System.

"Financing Sub System stated that the turnover she made was average. It analysed that there had been other companies she could have placed her shares in to flip in the very last minute." The System replied which made Jin curious as to why it did not advise Claire instead.

"It was a test for Claire, and there was no guarantee that the Financing Sub System was totally correct despite its excellent predictive analysis."

"Because it's the Black Stock Market? Anything unpredictable can happen?"

"Correct. Does User recall the September 11 terror attack at the US world trade centre? The European Stocks had been falling steadily for the past few months, but evidently, there were rush buying of shares from those companies. The moment the plane crashed, somehow the European company stocks went up drastically along with the Asian Stocks."

"While most of the world believed that it was genuinely a terror plot, they never knew that it was all about the money behind the scenes. Speculations, with substantial evidence, highly suggested that the attack was planned to target the overwhelming US market."

"Wow, that's dirty. Very dirty."

"Ever since then, the Black Stock Market got even...in your saying, 'dirtier'. Major companies were secretly sending businessmen on corporate sabotage missions or even terror attacks on a regular 'irregular' basis. In fact, as part of the revenge plot from the terror attack, the United States was the first to kickstart the financial crisis in 2007 to push everyone down from their high horses."

"So that is why you have to limit Claire using the omnipotent Financing Sub System despite your anti-scrambling procedures. No wonder Kraft who's literally a godly hacker refuses to use it to make money

for my business." Jin thought to himself while he pretended to be on the phone to continue the conversation with the System.

"Indeed. Especially when User's store is still too small and unworthy of the trouble it is bound to attract. Besides, User is already a power magnet for unlucky encounters. System needs to reduce such possibilities whenever able to." The System noted, and Jin rolled his eyes.

At that point, his phone vibrated for real, and so he decided to pick up the call.

"Boss Jin! Ke Loong here. When are we going to discuss the portal instances that we previously talked about? Oh, also Happy New Year to you!" Ke Loong was so overly excited that he practically screaming. Jin needed to put the phone at least 10 centimetres away to continue his call.

"And I also heard of that...peculiar circumstance that you were forced into by Tiger Clan Head Yuan Ba." Ke Loong emphasised much on the last part.

"I understand. If you have the time, I'll be more than happy to meet you later during dinner. I have some discussion going on right biw, so I'll come after that." Jin promised.

For a change, it was Ke Loong who agreed to wait for his customer rather than the other way around. This just showed how badly Sea Mesh's CEO wanted the portal instances to succeed.

Chapter 680 Cultivation Zoo's Occupants

"Jin, firstly thanks for letting me experience the System. It was fu- an eye opener to me. I hope there will be more opportunities like this in the future." Claire said as Jin had already teleported Rei back to his Japanese abode to prepare his meeting with the anxious executives in Studio Mashi.

"No problem. Until that time, I suggest that you play around with the app. I believe the Sub System has many more surprises in store for you." Jin smiled as they changed their conversation topic to the Cultivation Zoo instance.

Since Claire was around, both of them went through the manifest and Jin noticed that most of the animals on it were particularly exotic and not the usual kind of animals that the cultivators would go for. For example, the near extinct Siberian Tigers whose numbers were hovering at less than 50 in the world because of the increased monster sightings.

"Shouldn't you give me something more common? Like normal looking orange tigers? Or some easy to feed monkeys rather than this...Greater Bamboo Lemur? I doubt I am capable of handling such animals in my instance and having a variety of exotic animals will only bring in criticism to the cultivation zoo." Jin commented as he looked further down into the list and also saw a pair of Sumatran Rhinos.

"What are you talking about? Your instances are so lifelike, it provides exactly what all these animals need to breed, nurture and live! Not to mention, time in the dungeon instances can be manipulated, right? So, from my understanding, you will be able to save these animals once again...though you are correct. If the animals do die, your reputation will suffer tremendously." Claire gave a slight nod while rubbing her chin a little.

"What you really want to say is that if I fail, you will haunt me because it will damage Grandma Yuan's reputation, right? How did you even obtain such animals in the first place!? I doubt the World Wildlife Federation allows such animals to just be kept in a zoo." Jin exclaimed his anxiety out.

"Exactly, but when Grandma Yuan was the one to propose the use of dungeon instances to them for the purpose of breeding the endangered animals, many of the higher ups of the federation were very sceptical...until they saw your instances," Claire tried to explain, thinking that the dungeon supplier was informed. Yet, Jin continued to give her a confused expression as if he had no idea how this came about.

"Huh... Alright. In short, they personally entered your instances and had partaken in all the various types like the battle and service instances before determining that if these much resources were spent to recreate their natural habitat, it was indeed possible to save the endangered animals."

"At the same time, it will push the limits of cultivation for simliar cultivators with the similar species and perhaps create new cultivation styles in the process."

"I believe they communicated that with one of your shop assistants. It must have been ...ermm what's her name... Ah, Yun. That haughty looking lady at the bar. She filled them up with the details and even gave them a short tour to the unbuilt cultivation zoo instance." Claire tried to recall what was being told to her by the WWF agents.

"Really? I guess I was too busy for the past few weeks or so to entertain them. If they checked out the cultivation zoo instance I previously allocated and Yun had given them a tour, then everything makes sense." Jin replied, now understanding the gist of the situation.

"In any case, they were also doing this in hopes of getting Grandma Yuan's donation," Claire revealed the truth about the wildlife organisation's ulterior motives in allowing Jin's cultivation zoo instance to be realised.

"Mainly since Grandma Yuan co-owns a big portion of Shenzhen's Cultivation Zoo, so her donations guaranteed the continued operation of the WWF in China...or at least southern China." Claire continued.

"Sound to me like getting donations from Grandma Yuan and being able to let the endangered animals strive in my dungeon instance was more of a win-win situation for them rather than for us." Jin didn't sound too happy about once again being used as the pawn until Claire corrected him.

"Wrong, being able to obtain those animals will bring your dungeon shop up a notch, not to mention if you actually succeed in breeding them, it will bring major news and reputation to your place. High risk, big rewards. This is a long term investment by Grandma Yuan, hoping that you can continue her legacy in supporting the cultivation zoo scene."

"I still don't get the reasoning behind her support though." Jin felt perplexed that he was being shoved with an enormous responsibility even though he knew that this was extremely beneficial for him in the long run.

"While this is System's pure speculation, it's based on past evidence of past Sub System User Yuan's behaviour. The most likely reason why she may want for User to take on the cultivation zoo is therefore to fulfil Yun's former dream of becoming a Cultivation Zoo executive, taking over Grandma Yuan's

position. In conclusion, User might be used as a proxy for Yun, in hopes she might regain her broken memories."

"I see... and here I thought Grandma Yuan was bitter that the System created Yun." Jin deduced, and the System did not deny such an accusation.

"System is 99.99% sure that past Sub System User Yuan continues to have a deep seated hatred not just against the System. She also blamed the System for the actions taken, resulting in Previous User Ming having to undertake such drastic actions. She condemned the System for allowing Ming to unleash his anger willfully against the Royal Zodiac Clans and not turning time back further." The System stated as if it had turned over a new leaf when it was evident to Jin that the System also harboured some resentment towards Grandma Yuan. (Despite its rather monotonous voiceover, Jin was getting more proficient in deducing how the System felt based on its phrasing.)

"Well, if it's for Yun, I'll see what I can do for her too. Sometimes she feels so lost that I do not know whether it was her being her or if she was troubled by the loss of her memory." Jin decided, assigning personal value to the work he would do to ensure this particular cultivation zoo instance to become a success.

"Other than that, I have a list of candidates for you to choose. Judging from what had happened earlier, I figure you'll be giving them contracts too?" The way Claire asked it was obvious she wanted to more accurately know if everyone contracted would be given the opportunity to possess a Sub System. (The answer was an obvious no.)

"I'll give the contracts out to the people I accept, but not just anyone can possess a Sub System." Jin alleviated her fears of a potential increased number of Sub System Users and perhaps the possession of the Financing Sub System which had given her a taste of how thrilling it was to gamble once again in the stock markets.

"I see. I apologise for having asked for my own selfishness. Anyways, take a look at these people. They all have experience in Shenzhen Cultivation Zoo, and all of them were given the seal of approval by Grandma Yuan." Claire said as they returned to the conference room instance and spread out the number of files on the table for Jin to peruse.